



## Risk communication: Climate change as a human-health threat, a survey of public perceptions in Malta

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### Abstract:

Background: Scientific evidence shows that climate change is very likely the product of human behaviour and lifestyle. The effects of climate change on human health are diverse in nature and range from direct effects due to extreme weather events such as heat waves, floods and storms, to indirect effects such as those caused by water and food shortages. Methods: A telephone survey was conducted between January and February 2009, on a stratified representative random sample of the Maltese population over the age of 18 years (N Euro Surveillance (Bulletin Europeen Sur Les Maladies Transmissibles; European Communicable Disease Bulletin) 310 819). Results: Five hundred and forty-three individuals successfully participated in the survey giving a response rate of 92.7%. The respondent sample was very similar to the target population by gender (P Euro Surveillance (Bulletin Europeen Sur Les Maladies Transmissibles; European Communicable Disease Bulletin) 0.977), age (P Euro Surveillance (Bulletin Europeen Sur Les Maladies Transmissibles; European Communicable Disease Bulletin) 0.767) and district (P Euro Surveillance (Bulletin Europeen Sur Les Maladies Transmissibles; European Communicable Disease Bulletin) 0.812). The results of the study demonstrate a very strong relationship between the perception of climate change as a threat to health and well-being, support for climate change mitigation policy and a willingness to implement measures to address climate change. Conclusion: The findings of this study show that the perception that climate change may claim lives, cause disease, reduce the standard of living and worsen water shortages, may be the strongest driver behind support for climate change mitigation policy and a willingness to act. It is recommended that, in order to gain more public support, climate change campaigns and risk communication strategies should frame climate change as a threat to human health and general well-being.

**Source:** <http://dx.doi.org/10.1093/eurpub/ckq181>

### Resource Description

#### Communication:

resource focus on research or methods on how to communicate or frame issues on climate change; surveys of attitudes, knowledge, beliefs about climate change

A focus of content

#### Communication Audience:

audience to whom the resource is directed

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Public

## **Exposure :**

weather or climate related pathway by which climate change affects health

Air Pollution, Extreme Weather Event, Food/Water Security, Food/Water Security, Precipitation, Temperature

**Extreme Weather Event:** Flooding, Hurricanes/Cyclones

**Temperature:** Extreme Heat, Fluctuations

## **Geographic Feature:**

resource focuses on specific type of geography

Ocean/Coastal

## **Geographic Location:**

resource focuses on specific location

Non-United States

**Non-United States:** Europe

**European Region/Country:** European Country

**Other European Country :** Malta

## **Health Impact:**

specification of health effect or disease related to climate change exposure

Cardiovascular Effect, Infectious Disease, Injury, Mental Health/Stress, Morbidity/Mortality, Respiratory Effect, Other Health Impact

**Infectious Disease:** Foodborne/Waterborne Disease, Vectorborne Disease

**Foodborne/Waterborne Disease:** Salmonellosis

**Vectorborne Disease:** Mosquito-borne Disease

**Mosquito-borne Disease:** Chikungunya, Dengue, Malaria

**Other Health Impact:** General well-being

## **Mitigation/Adaptation:**

mitigation or adaptation strategy is a focus of resource

Adaptation, Mitigation

## **Resource Type:**

format or standard characteristic of resource

Research Article

## **Timescale:**

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time period studied

Time Scale Unspecified